

Star Wars

(1977)

(20th Century-Fox)

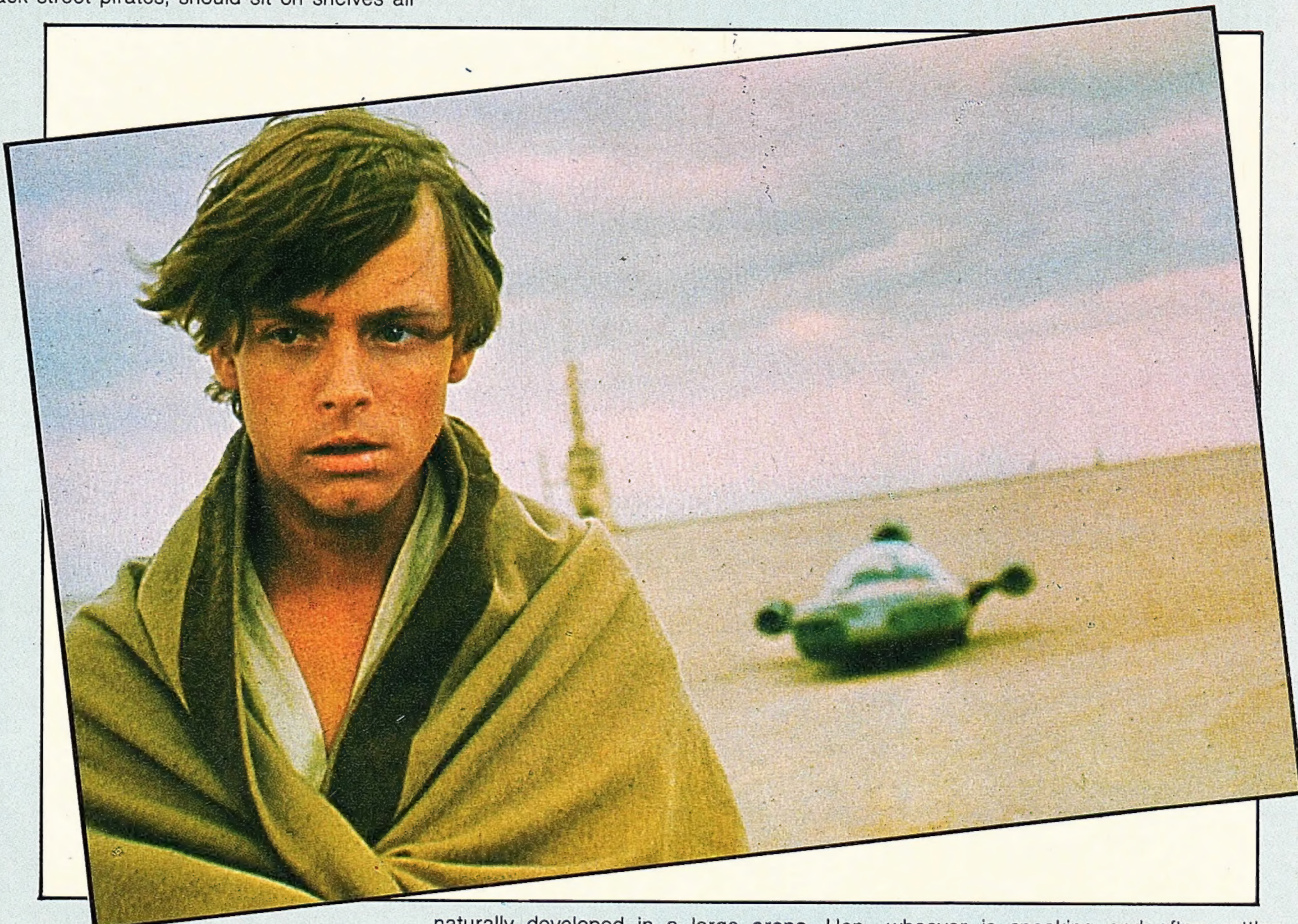
SINCE VIDEO really began to take a hold, somewhere in 1979, one of the biggest status symbols for those with machines has been to have the very latest films for home viewing.

Superman, *Dressed To Kill*, *Close Encounters* and *The Elephant Man*, have all, in their time, been the film to have on video.

But where interest usually faded as yet another blockbuster hit the silver screen, one film remained the ultimate status symbol. Even now, five years after it was made, *Star Wars* is Britain's most wanted video.

Strange to think that even third or fourth generation copies, hurriedly bashed out by back street pirates, should sit on shelves all

BRITAIN'S *MOST WANTED* VIDEO



over Britain, dreadful, unwatchable testaments to the pulling power of oneupmanship.

Inevitable, of course, that they would eventually be relegated to waste-bin fodder (even the tape, after all, was mostly third-rate: hardly re-usable). That day has now come as the pristine, legitimately produced version with stereo soundtrack hits the high streets of Britain.

Just think: for three quid you can now view in your own home the film that at one time was changing hands for £60.

Will you want to? Of course you will.

Any reservations you may have had about the successful transference of a giant screen epic to the comfort of your living-room can immediately be dismissed. 20th Century-Fox Video can take pride in a job well done: *Star Wars*, all its excitement intact, actually gains in some respects from the intimacy of the small screen.

For a start it no longer intimidates through its sheer size, and the characters can be better appreciated at close range. No longer victims of the breathless pace which the film

naturally developed in a large arena, Han Solo and Luke Skywalker benefit particularly and emerge as a kind of star-hopping Starsky and Hutch.

Subsequent exposure to the lead players — in *Empire Strikes Back* and, for Harrison Ford, *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* — gives *Star Wars* on video a flavour of revisiting old friends. After all, first time round no-one had heard of Ford or Mark Hamill, and Carrie Fisher was hardly remembered for her debut in *Shampoo* (1975). Now they're recognisable personalities, which always helps enjoyment of a film.

But best of all about the video version is the care which has been taken in scanning the wide-screen original in order to present all relevant action within the confines of the domestic TV.

This means you don't get vital conversations between two characters while the camera lingers lovingly on a desolate landscape, or, even worse, the tip of someone's nose. Few things are better designed to make you acutely aware of the size of your 14 in. portable than a bad scanning job where the camera never quite seems to rest on

whoever is speaking and often settles on immobile objects of no real interest.

No such problems with *Star Wars*. You can savour comfortably moments you've probably forgotten: the appearance of the little sand people; Alec Guinness's wonder-



fully droll performance; the bar scene where all sorts of freakish aliens get drunk, but R2-D2 and C-3PO are barred because 'we don't serve their kind'.

Bigotry in space: it takes all sorts to make a galaxy.